

SITUATION REPORT NO. 7
INCIDENT NO. 99-009
DATE: April 9, 1999 TIME: 3:00 p.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Spring flooding – Above normal soil moisture content throughout North Dakota, compounded by seven years of flooding, has resulted in overland and river flooding.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGES: A revised forecast from the National Weather Service calls for Devils Lake to rise up to 3 ½ feet this summer to 1,447 to 1,447.5 feet, approximately one-half to one foot higher than the natural spill elevation between Devils Lake and Stump Lake. The spill elevation is 1,446.6 feet; the current lake level measured 1,444.5 feet at Creel Bay on April 9. Forecasted levels of 1,447 and 1,447.5 feet are based on normal precipitation and evaporation through July. Above normal precipitation and below normal evaporation may cause the lake to rise above 1,447.5 feet. If below normal precipitation and above normal evaporation take place, the lake will peak below 1,447 feet.

The revised forecast for Devils Lake represents the second largest flood event with the 1997 flood as the largest on record, according to engineers for the N.D. State Water Commission (SWC). For Devils Lake to reach the predicted elevation, the lake volume would increase by approximately 400,000 acre-feet and would inundate an additional 21,000 acres. The actual lake level, evaporation and overflow amounts will determine the spillover amount to Stump Lake. The present condition of the natural spill outlet is not capable of passing a high flow of water at the predicted level. The overflow toward Stump Lake will have only a minor effect on the summer crest for Devils Lake. Although precipitation levels over the Devils Lake Basin in March were near normal, significant precipitation occurred during blizzard conditions on April 1-2 and additional snowfall on April 3-4. An airborne snow survey conducted April 5-7 by the National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center indicated that the basin contained an average water equivalent of 3.5 inches. Recent mild temperatures have caused a rapid melt of remaining snow and ice within the basin. Substantial runoff is now occurring on all coulees contributing to Devils Lake.

The SWC reported the following changes are expected to occur if Devils Lake reaches 1,447.5 feet:

	Spring	Current – 4/9	Predicted Levels		Increase from Spring	
					1,447	1,447.5
Level: Feet	1,444	1,444.5	1,447	1,447.5	3	3.5
Area: acres	106,452	109,143	124,085	127,562	17,633	21,110
Volume :Acre ft.	2,084,111	2,138,664	2,428,786	2,492,543	344,675	408,432

In the Devils Lake area, Benson County officials report that roads are being inundated and eroded by runoff from spring snowmelt and by recent precipitation in the area. Nearly four to eight inches of snow fell over the Devils Lake Basin during last week's ice and snow storms.

The Red River of the North was cresting at Drayton on April 9 at 41.7 feet and is expected to crest

at Pembina at 50 feet on April 12-13. The crest at Drayton is nearly one foot over the 32-foot flood stage. On April 9, the level at Pembina measured 48.3 feet; flood stage is 50 feet. In Grand Forks, the Red River is slowly dropping after cresting at 44.3 feet last week. The level measured 40.9 feet on April 9; flood stage is 28 feet.

Preliminary estimates by Minnkota Electric Cooperative indicate that the company sustained up to \$3.5 million in losses occurred during last week's ice storm. The cooperative lost 61 metal towers. Cass County Cooperative indicated losses of up to \$750,000, and officials for Nodak Electric Cooperative estimate losses at \$500,00.

In Walsh County, four additional miles of township road have been closed. To date, 38 miles of county roads are closed because of flooding, including County Road 2, from the Grand Forks County to Pembina County line. All township roads east of I-29 are either inundated or non-accessible. Because of last week's additional precipitation, most gravel county and township roads that have not flooded are becoming saturated.

Two main arteries linking Pembina County to Minnesota, N.D. Highway 66 near Drayton and N.D. Highway 5 near Joliette, have been closed.

McHenry County officials reported snow depths of seven to 20 inches during last week's storm. Preliminary damage assessments to date indicate that 58 road sites in 16 townships have been damaged by flood waters.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: The American Red Cross has provided shelter to 19 Grand Forks County residents and five Walsh County residents because of ice storm and flooding conditions. To date, the relief agency has served 579 meals to emergency workers and volunteers in the Grand Forks and Hillsboro areas. Twenty-three volunteers and three paid staff are assisting with flood-fight efforts in the Grand Forks area, and five volunteers in the Hillsboro area.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: The N.D. Civil Air Patrol provided aerial support on April 7 for the staff of North Dakota Emergency Management who participated in aerial surveillance of the Jamestown Reservoir, the Baldhill Dam, and the portions of the Sheyenne, Goose, Red Lake, Red and Souris River Basins. These basins appeared full and near capacity in most locations, although flood waters have inundated low-lying areas and isolated a number of farmsteads. Inundated areas include sites where homes had been removed from flood-prone areas through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), underscoring the successful impact of North Dakota's mitigation efforts.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) had provided three pumps to the Grand Forks Parks District to help with flood-fight efforts. In addition, parks districts for the city of Fargo and Bismarck have provided support for debris removal efforts.

In Grand Forks, levee work had been completed prior to the crest of April 1, and staff from the USACE and City Engineering reported no serious problems existed with the city's diking system. The Emergency Operations Center staff plans to work from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. through the upcoming weekend and will return to a five-day workweek once the level of the Red River drops to 28 feet.

Staff from the USACE provided technical assistance to the cities of Pembina and Drayton.

Crews from the N.D. Department of Transportation (ND DOT) have completed a crossover on I-29 near the Minto exchange where floodwaters inundated the northbound lane. The cities of Grafton and Minto continue to monitor flood conditions.

The N.D. Highway Patrol has assisted local law enforcement resources with traffic control measures.

The Pembina County Emergency Manager reported that the dike work in Drayton by the city shed and Catholic church as been completed. Work has begun on an earthen dike on the east side of town near a parking lot on Main Street.

Crews from the Benson County Highway Department have been flagging and closing flood-damaged roads and repairing washouts.

To date, flood emergency declarations have been issued by the counties of Bottineau, Grand Forks, Pembina, Pierce and Walsh and the cities of Grand Forks, Drayton and Pembina. Flood disaster declarations have been issued by Dickey County and the city of Ludden. A spring ice storm disaster declaration was issued by Barnes County.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: Assistance has been provided, as reported.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: USACE, Red Cross, consulting engineers and members of the N.D. Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
9. OTHER: Situation Reports published by the N.D. Division of Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director